

Michigan Banker

May
2009
Vol. 21,
No 5



Michigan College Access Network

*Direct from the Governor's Education Summit, An Exclusive Report:
"Breaking Through Barriers - Building a Michigan Network
for College Access and Success" pg. 14*

Governor Granholm Unveils Plan to Create The Michigan College Access Network

By BILL PERRY

A recently released report from McKinsey and Company examined the economic impact of the achievement gap in America's schools. The report from this prestigious management consulting firm found that the underutilization of human potential as reflected in the achievement gap is extremely costly. Existing gaps impose the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession – one substantially larger than the deep recession the country is currently experiencing. For individuals, avoidable shortfalls in academic achievement impose heavy and often tragic consequences via lower earnings, poor health, and higher rates of incarceration.

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm is the first to recognize the undeniable link between education and economic health. On April 28th she unveiled a project to create the Michigan College Access Network (MCAN), in front of a 750+ person audience attending the Governor's Education Summit in Lansing. This audience, covering the entire spectrum of the Who's Who of Michigan education as well as well-respected community leaders from across the state enthusiastically embraced the project. MCAN will promote postsecondary education by supporting local, community-based college access programs. The Network will also provide the state with a one-stop-shop web portal where

students, with the help of their families and college access professionals, can plan, apply, and pay for college. The governor expects the network up and running by the fall of 2010.

Creating a culture of college in Michigan is a top priority and was truly brought to the forefront of the education dialogue with the release of the final report of Lt. Governor's Cherry Commission on Higher Education & Economic Growth. "Our plan to secure the future for Michigan residents includes creating the best schools, improving access to quality health care, and

“The future will be here tomorrow — that's why all Michigan students must start planning today for the education and careers they will pursue after high school”



Katy Haycock, President of the Education Trust, delivering the keynote speech.

strengthening our economy by attracting more high-tech, high-wage jobs to our state. Our goal is to make Michigan the best place in the nation to raise a family,” said Cherry. Based on the report's recommendations (released in December 2004) the Governor and Lieutenant Governor boldly set the goal of doubling the number of college graduates in the state within ten years. Much progress has been made toward implementation, including creation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), Michigan Merit Exam (MME), and universal Michigan Promise Scholarship.” Just before the Summit, the Governor also announced the first ten communities to be designated “Promise Zones” – public-private partnerships that will attempt to replicate the educational and economic successes of the Kalamazoo Promise by implementing place-based scholarship programs. Other recommendations call on Michigan's colleges and universities to do a better job helping students complete degrees or certification, to make it easier for students to transfer from one higher education institution to another, and to bring larger numbers of adult workers who have earned college credits in the past back to campus to finish their degrees.

Among educators, Paula Cunningham, the President and CEO of Capitol National Bank and lifetime educator said, “As we move into the 21st Century, the challenges of a highly sophisticated global economy continue to increase at an unprecedented pace. Technology and science are taking us to new frontiers that demand higher levels of education. Now, more than ever the future of Michigan is inextricably linked to our young people having access to higher education. The knowledge, skills and training acquired at colleges and universities across the land will enable our young people to meet these future challenges head-on, ensuring better futures for them, our state and, ultimately, our nation. Michigan Community Banks are extremely important in this collaborative effort which focuses on providing access to higher education for the people of

Michigan. This is what corporate responsibility is all about, working together with the different sectors represented here for the common goal of empowering minds for the future of Michigan.”

Kati Haycock, President of the Education Trust, was the keynote speaker at the event. The Education Trust was established in 1990 by the American Association for Higher Education as a special project to encourage colleges and universities to support K-12 reform efforts. They believe that it is impossible to achieve significant change in K-12 without simultaneously changing the way that post-secondary education does business. Her message was clear: “Regardless of where it occurs, schools must maintain a relentless focus on improving the education of all students, and particularly those students whom the system has traditionally left behind.”

When launching MCAN, Governor Granholm emphasized, “The future will be here tomorrow — that’s why all Michigan students must start planning today for the education and careers they will pursue after high school.” These sentiments were echoed by Michael A. Boulus, Executive Director for the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan: “We support the



Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, with Richard Murphy, a College Access Coordinator from the St. Clair County Community Foundation.



Paula Cunningham, President and CEO of Capitol National Bank acting as a moderator for a Community-Based Solutions to College Access discussion.

Michigan College Access Network because it is bringing together diverse constituents from across Michigan with a common mission of guiding students to careers and assisting students with their preparation for and access to college, which is critical in these economic times. This network can help the Michigan universities expand enrollments while reaching out to a previously under-tapped population — low income, first-generation students.”

Brenda L. Hunt, President and CEO of the Battle Creek Community Foundation expressed similar points of view, when she said, “The Michigan College Access Network is a new, positive step in the recovery of our great state. Michigan is home to some of the greatest institutions of higher education in the country. This is the time that all of us must come together, community by community, to help our citizens access these institutions and create the educated and highly trained workforce of the future. I look forward to the day when everyone in our community, as well as the state of Michigan, has the opportunity to access post-secondary education or technical training.”

Nancy Miller, President of the Jackson Legacy Program, underscored the collaborative importance of this initiative. The

Continued on Page 16



Governor Jennifer M. Granholm delivering her keynote speech to the 750+ audience at the Governor's Education Summit.

College Access Network

Continued from Page 15

Jackson Legacy Scholarship and College Access Program were created to cultivate productive citizens through effective, relevant education; to provide Jackson County high school graduates with opportunities to further their education; and to revitalize Jackson County. She emphasized the "network" approach to providing comprehensive and integrated college access services: "Partners, including educators, business leaders, political officials, non-profits, churches, philanthropists, parents, students and others believe that our youth are the key to future economic success and community growth, and must work together to ensure that these young people reach their full potential. In Jackson, college attainment is no longer a luxury preserved for some. Improving college access and persistence in postsecondary education are now goals for all youth and a strategic priority for the Jackson Community."

This collaborative approach is in full display on the cover of this issue of *Michigan Banker*, which includes Kathleen N. Straus, President of the State Board of Education, seated next

to Governor Granholm and Paula Cunningham. They are surrounded by the aforementioned Michael Boulus, and Nancy Miller, as well Michael Hansen, President of the Michigan Community College Association; Chuck Wilbur, Senior Advisor for Education and Communication and Brandy Johnson-Faith, College Access Coordinator (both from the Office of Governor Granholm); Edward Blews, President, of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Michigan; Patrick J. O'Connor, former President of the National Association for College Admission Counseling; Richard Murphy, College Access Coordinator, St. Clair County Community Foundation; and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan.

This concept was reaffirmed by Dr. David Dieterle, President of the Michigan Council on Economic Education, who remarked, "Every credible study on the future transition of Michigan identifies higher education as the key. If we are to be successful in maintaining our economic position nationally and internationally our young people must have all access to higher education. As I like to remind everyone, children may be 50% of our population, but they are certainly 100% of

our future." Dr. Patrick J. O'Connor, former President of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, added, "MCAN will offer an excellent opportunity for students, families, and school counselors to work together on one common site to set college goals and investigate the many opportunities that exist after high school. Having all of this information in one location will make the realization for college dreams that much easier."

Through the MCAN web portal, students will be able to find the right post-secondary institution using side-by-side comparisons of Michigan universities and colleges; search for grant and scholarship opportunities; use career planning tools; measure their progress toward meeting college entrance requirements; submit all college-related documents, including admissions applications, financial aid applications and transcripts; use free ACT test preparation resources; and more. "Michigan must Re-Imagine how we educate our students to develop a workforce empowered for the global needs of this century," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan, who was one of the featured speakers at the Summit. MCAN is another step in the right direction to make this possible.